

1415 SHORE ROAD (HOUSE)
(Stansbury Estates, 1415 Shore Road (House))
Middle River
Baltimore County
Maryland

HABS MD-1225
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
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1415 SHORE ROAD (House)

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- Location:** 1415 Shore Road, Middle River, Baltimore County, Maryland
- Significance:** This Cemesto panel prefabricated house was one of 297 built for World War II defense workers in the Stansbury Estates neighborhood by the Glenn L. Martin Aircraft Company.
- Description:** The one-story Cemesto houses developed for Martin Aircraft workers were a 24 by 28 foot rectangle in plan, divided into four and a half rooms – two bedrooms, kitchen/storage room, living room with dining alcove, and bathroom. The communal areas of the house were open plan and featured large picture windows.¹ The original exterior sheathing and windows, as well as the original one-story side-gable form, are still extant at 1415 Shore Road.
- History:** This Cemesto panel prefabricated house was one of 297 single-family houses built for World War II defense workers in the Stansbury Estates neighborhood during 1941. There was a great need for worker housing in Middle River because of the rapid growth of the Glenn L. Martin Company aircraft plants. Martin's payroll went from 17,000 prior to the start of World War II in Europe to 45,000 by November 1941.² The small town of Middle River, with 161 residents in 1939, and its local building community were unprepared and unequipped to house the massive influx of newcomers.³ Aero Acres and Stansbury Estates were the first new worker subdivisions sponsored by the Martin Corporation to start meeting this housing shortfall.
- For Stansbury Estates, and Stansbury Manor, an earlier garden apartment complex, the Company relied on a 1937 Albert Kahn master plan calling for a garden city along the Chesapeake Bay shoreline.⁴ The 49-acre wooded site for Stansbury Estates includes a small peninsula reaching into the Chesapeake Bay one-half mile east of Martin Plant No. 1. The area was platted by Martin Company Designer/Builder Jan Porel. The average lot size is 48

¹ "Houses for Defense," *Architectural Forum* 75 (November 1941): 322.

² Ibid.

³ Jack Breihan, "Necessary Visions: Community Planning in Wartime," *Maryland Humanities* 71 (November 1998): 11.

⁴ Isabelle Gournay et. al. "Modern Movement in Maryland – Context Essay," Draft (December 2002), 35.

by 100 feet. These lots are arranged in superblocs with the houses facing interior courts and service walks and concrete-curbed macadam roads at the rear. This site planning reflected current garden city ideals of separating pedestrian and green space from automobile traffic and other utilitarian concerns, most recently promoted at the Federal planned community of Greenbelt, Maryland. The general contractor was Martin's Stansbury Manor Corporation, headed by Porel.⁵

Celotex Corporation manufactured the Cemesto houses using prefabricated four by twelve foot panels of hard surfaced insulating board. Celotex developed the Cemesto panel in 1936 by sandwiching one to one-and-one-half inch of bagasse (sugar cane) fiber between layers of asbestos cement. Each exterior wall panel was 1 ¾ inch thick and weighed approximately 235 pounds.⁶ The architectural firm of Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill designed the Cemesto houses for Celotex.

While the Cemesto panels, specialized shingles, and other building elements were prefabricated, the work crews did include a number of subcontractors to build concrete foundation piers, assemble plumbing, and finish interiors. Although somewhat altered and under new redevelopment pressure, Middle River and its former defense worker housing such as 1415 Shore Road are noteworthy examples of World War II national defense resources for the homefront.

- Sources:** Breihan, Jack. "Necessary Visions: Community Planning in Wartime," *Maryland Humanities* 71 (November 1998): 11-14.
- Gournay, Isabelle, et. al. "Modern Movement in Maryland – Context Essay," Draft (December 2002).
- "Houses for Defense," *Architectural Forum* 75 (November 1941): 321-326.
- Sanborn Map Company, Middle River, Maryland. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1948.
- Historian:** Lisa Pfueller Davidson, 2006
- Project Information:** This short form history was prepared to supplement photographic

⁵ "Houses for Defense," 322.

⁶ "Houses for Defense," 321.

documentation of World War II-era resources in Middle River. During 2004-05 HABS staff photographer James Rosenthal photographed a series of sites in Baltimore City and County in preparation for the *Buildings of Maryland* publication. Maryland Historical Trust sponsored the photography project and is producing *Buildings of Maryland* as part of the Society of Architectural Historians' *Buildings of the United States* series with the University of Virginia Press.